Curb on tobacco use in the Country

*298. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether WHO has called on the countries to take action against advertising of tobacco and tobacco products in order to protect the health of the young and old smokers and non-smokers alike:

(b) if so, the details of the suggestions given by WHO in this regard;

(c) whether Government are aware of the WHO estimate of deaths per year;

(d) the number of deaths taking place every year in the country due to tobacco use; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to curb/curtail tobacco use in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. P. THAKUR): (a) to (e) The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended a ban on both advertising and sponsorship, as it is essential to reduce tobacco consumption significantly and quickly. In various Resolutions passed in the World Health Assembly, the Member States have deplored all direct and indirect practices having the aim of promoting use of tobacco and urge the imposition of progressive restrictions and concerted action to eventually eliminate all direct and indirect advertising, promoting and sponsorship concerning tobacco.

Based on a few community-based surveys in India, it is estimated that eight lakh deaths per year could be attributable to tobacco use.

The following steps have been taken by the Government to discourage the use of tobacco products:

* The Cigarettes (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1975 requires manufacturers or persons trading in cigarettes to display a statutory warning. Similar warning is required to be displayed on advertisements also. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare have sent letters to State Governments and Union Territories requesting them to ensure strict adherence of provisions of the Act from time to time.

* Instructions have been issued through the Cabinet Secretariat on 7th May, 1990, prohibiting smoking in hospitals, dispensaries, educational institutions, conference rooms, domestic air flights, AC sleeper coaches, sub urban trains etc.

* Direct tobacco related advertisements are prohibited on Doordarshan and All India Radio. The Cable TV Regulation Act has been recently amended prohibiting tobacco advertising on Cable TV also.

* Under Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules, a warning 'Chewing of Tobacco is injurious to Health' has also been made mandatory.

The Government have also introduced a comprehensive Bill, namely, "the Cigarettes and other Tobacco products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution), Bill, 2001" in the Rajya Sabha on 7th March, 2001, which was referred to the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development of the Rajya Sabha. The Standing Committee presented its report in Rajya Sabha on 5-12-2001. This Bill, *inter-alia*, provides for a total ban on advertising of cigarettes and other tobacco products and prohibits sponsorship of sports and cultural events either directly or indirectly, sale of tobacco products to those below 18 years of age and smoking in public places.

Cheap medicine for anthrax

*299. SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Indian pharmaceutical company 'Ranbaxy' is offering to provide medicines for anthrax induced diseases at less than half the price of the US companies;

(b) whether Government have taken up the matter with the USA; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the USA Government?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) to (c) The Government of India had offered to the United States, supply of US $ 1 million worth of Ciprofloxacin for treatment of Anthrax. While thanking Government of India for the offer, the U.S. Ambassador in New Delhi, had informed that the U.S. Government would not be availing of the offer, as